

From Charleston to Sea

By Joquita Burke

In April 1670, the 93 passengers aboard the Carolina stepped off the frigate and onto the solid soil of Charleston. After eight months at sea, this first group of English settlers to enter Charleston Harbor was not met by cheerful activity directors in spotless white uniforms. No signs indicated the way to luggage claim. And it was no short walk to a leisurely dinner of She-Crab soup and freshly steamed oysters.

On the other hand, they were the first "cruise" passengers to disembark in what has become a favorite departure point for ports from Boston to Cozumel, Grand Cayman to Grand Bahamas--Charleston.

Unlike many departure points for cruises, Charleston is in itself a destination. So, if you plan to cruise from the city, give yourself time to enjoy a little of the renowned Charlestonian hospitality and natural beauty. You'll need at least a few days to enjoy this oceanside wonder repeatedly named one of the top 10 travel destinations in North America by readers of Condé Nast Traveler magazine. And with good reason.

Happily for passengers, the cruise ships depart from a Passenger Terminal right in the middle of the city's historic district. Just two miles off both Interstate 26 and US Hwy. 17 and less than 20 minutes from the Charleston International Airport, the Port of Charleston's departure terminal lies right at the foot of Market

Street.

The city's famous Old City Market area is replete with shops and restaurants, most less than two blocks away. Hours can be idled away browsing art galleries, snacking on Benne Seed cookies, exploring the many tours, historic sites and attractions, peeking in the renowned gardens, strolling the cobblestone streets or feasting on Charleston cuisine. The nearby Visitor Center is the place to get acquainted with numerous touring options for just about every interest from golf to ghosts. A number of Charleston-area hotels make your visit easier with cruise packages that include such extras as free cruise parking and shuttle service to the terminal.

And almost sadly, the time will come for passengers to climb aboard. Norwegian Cruise Line and Carnival Cruise Line offer a number of choices for destinations both north and south. Trips range from a quick five-day jaunt to the Bahamas to a leisurely 15-day journey up the Eastern Seaboard to Boston. On board guests will wine, dine and relax in the famous style of today's cruise lines. But don't be surprised if on the last day of the cruise you find yourself against the rail, watching for a first glimpse of that city where you started it all... Charleston.

Find out more...

Charleston Area Convention &
Visitors Bureau and Visitor Center
843-853-8000
www.charlestoncvb.com

